

Plenty of air should circulate through the room to overcome the smell of ether, and encourage the patient to take some long, deep breaths to remove the ether from the lungs.

Of course, the head must be laid low, and every part of the body kept as quiet as possible to prevent nausea.

The surgeon will give full directions as to the after care of the patient, and as to what particular complications—if any—might be likely to occur.

(To be continued.)

SANITARY INSPECTION: A NEW FIELD FOR NURSES

By L. L. DOCK

IN the last year or two we have heard a good deal of positions as Sanitary Inspector, and women have been sought for such positions, but have not always been readily found. Nurses have been urged to try to secure such positions, on the ground that their training gives them a superior advantage and fits them peculiarly for the work of Sanitary Inspector, and this is quite true; however, there is much vagueness among those who have thought and inquired about it as to what special training is required. Within the past year the opening of a number of positions to women as Sanitary Inspectors under the Tenement-House Commission of New York City has brought the subject still closer, and it is to bring the work to the attention of nurses, and to help them to understand just what is required, that this article is written.

Sanitary inspection of houses, factories, shops, etc., means simply an extension of the supervisory work of the good head nurse when she makes thorough rounds in her wards, looking into every corner and cranny, turning out closets, examining drains and pipes, waste-boxes, soiled-clothes chutes, garbage and refuse receptacles; or of the good housekeeper, searching the dark corners of the cellar, and bringing her inquisitive nose to investigate every suspicious whiff of air.

It is peculiarly the kind of detail work for which well-trained women are fitted, and for which the trained nurse, with her knowledge of bacteriology and of the causes and origin of diseases should be especially well-fitted. The nurse's training in system and order (if this has been good), and her experience in learning how to get through with a great variety of work in a given time, also her habits of discipline and proper subordination to proper authority, if well grounded in her, should give her a great advantage over the woman who has not been trained and disciplined, however intelligent she may be.

The Sanitary Inspector, though she should be and is expected to be a good deal of a health missionary and teacher of sanitation, is yet not conducting an independent business. She must exercise the same discretion and propriety in the matter of reporting as the head nurse is expected to show. Some things are within her own power to administer and influence; others lie with her superiors, and she must not infringe, but must promptly report and wait results.

It is quite necessary that a woman inspector should really love the kind of people among whom her work takes her. If she is not thoroughly sympathetic with them, she will not make a success of work so delicate and requiring so much tact. She must be sincerely their friend, in a true and steady and sensible way, and must love teaching, explaining, enlightening, and demonstrating.

It will be just as well for her to remember that extreme cleanliness is quite a recent accomplishment even for the superior portions of the human race, and not to deal too severe a judgment on people who have not yet advanced so far in general culture. It requires constant vigilance even for favored people to keep themselves and their surroundings absolutely clean; much harder is it for toiling and drudging humanity, among whom the Sanitary Inspector is sent. She must remember, too, that the knowledge of bacteriology and of the origin of diseases which she has, which intensifies and vivifies the impression made upon her by every pile of rubbish and every bad smell, is totally absent from the minds of most of her people. Many of the Italians, for instance, have the ideas of the Middle Ages in regard to disease and household hygiene.

The Sanitary Inspector, therefore, must have some comprehension of the historical period in which the minds of her people belong. Also she must not be afraid of work.

As for the special knowledge required, this must, unfortunately, at present be obtained in a rather desultory way.

Dr. Price, in his "Hand-Book on Sanitation," says: "In England the public-health laws require that a Sanitary Inspector shall have a certificate from one of the several sanitary institutes giving diplomas in sanitation after a course of study and thorough examination. Here in the United States we have no such special institutes, and no educational requirement is made of the candidate except a civil-service examination, which is, at best, insufficient to show the qualification of the candidate. It is true, some medical and other colleges have lately established courses in sanitary science, but the teaching is as yet very rudimentary, and the students are not usually those who seek sanitary positions."

The would-be inspector, then, must be largely self-educated. What shall she study?

Dr. Price says again: "He should have at least a high-school education; should know something of geology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, mechanics, physiology, and the allied sciences, and be able to draw. He should have made a thorough study of sanitation, both theoretical and practical; should understand thoroughly the principles of ventilation, drainage, plumbing, etc., besides knowing enough of practical building construction, etc., that he may not be hoodwinked by builders or plumbers."

In looking over this somewhat formidable array of subjects, one realizes how much of the foundation of it all has been laid in the excellent lectures on hygiene and sanitation now given in our best training-schools for nurses. Graduate nurses who have no opportunity of special study in technical institutes are advised to apply for the privilege of attending such lectures in some good training-school. Then, taking these as the basis, she can follow out the various subjects in greater detail in such books as Harrington's "*Manual of Practical Hygiene*." An excellent plan would be to have a quiz-master on these subjects—a high-school teacher or someone whose knowledge sufficed.

The large and exhaustive works on hygiene contain all the theoretical side of plumbing which the student needs to master. For the practical side, if she could find some progressive and intelligent plumber who would quiz her, and who would take her about and show her the various points pro and con about plumbing, this would be the best possible preparation for sanitary work.

The plumbing is absolutely necessary. It must be studied as thoroughly as possible. Mathematics is important, for the calculation of areas, cubic space, etc.

For nurses who contemplate working in New York City there are the special codes of that city—sanitary code and tenement-house law—practically to be learned by heart.

Among the smaller hand-books, the best decidedly, because the most comprehensive and yet concise and definite, is Dr. Price's "*Hand-Book on Sanitation*."

It is especially useful to those choosing New York as their field, as it contains much directly relating to the New York law, and much practical instruction from the precise stand-point of the Tenement-House Commission. It is quite certain that sanitary science will grow and that trained women will take it up. As the demand increases the opportunity for completer special education will appear,—“first the function, and then the organ.”

No occupation could possibly offer more interesting and satisfying possibilities, especially to the women whose temperaments incline them

to become discouraged over purely palliative or ameliorating work. After one has worked for a time in healing wounds which should never have been inflicted, tending illnesses which should never have developed, sending patients to hospital who need not have gone if their homes were habitable, bringing charitable aid to persons who would not have needed charity if health had not been ruined by unwholesome conditions,—one loses heart and longs for preventive work, constructive work—something that will make it less easy for so many illnesses and accidents to occur, that will help to bring better homes and workshops, better conditions of life and of labor.

This all seems possible with the development of a "Science of Health."

BOOKS FOR STUDY

- "A Manual of Practical Hygiene." By Charles Harrington, M.D. Lea Bros. & Co.
- "Municipal Engineering and Sanitation." By M. N. Baker, Ph.B., C.E. Macmillan Co.
- "Municipal Sanitation in the United States." By Charles V. Chapin, M.D. Snow & Farnham, Providence, R. I.
- "Dangerous Trades." Edited by Thomas Oliver, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. E. P. Dutton & Co.
- "Hand-Book on Sanitation." By George M. Price, M.D., Medical Sanitary Inspector, Department of Health, N. Y. John Wiley & Sons.
- "How the Other Half Lives." By Jacob A. Riis.
- "The Housing Question in London from 1855 to 1900." C. J. Stewart, for the London County Council.
- "Tenement-House Reform in New York from 1834 to 1900." For the Tenement-House Commission, by Lawrence Veiller, Secretary, 61 Irving Place, New York.
- "The Housing Problem." By F. Spencer Baldwin, Ph.D., Civic Department of Twentieth Century Club. Boston, Mass.
- Municipal Affairs*, fall number, 1902, containing articles on housing conditions. Reform Club, 50-52 Pine Street, New York City.

WHAT STATE REGISTRATION FOR NURSES MEANS *

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SELF-PRESERVATION is said to be the first law of nature. Every creature, from the tiniest insect to man,—the grand masterpiece of the Great Creator,—one and all, following the instincts of nature, practises this law.

* Read at the meeting of the Illinois State Association of Graduate Nurses, Chicago, February 9, 1903.